

Build This Three-Way **Travelpod**

It's a boat, it's a camper, it's an equipment carrier all in one. And it closes up like a capsule for high-speed highway travel.

By CHARLES R. GRETZ



IF THE CAMPING BUG hasn't had his stinger in you yet, watch out! Here's just the rig that could give you the fever. It's the perfect answer to family camping in a car. After an 8500-mile trip, I should know.

What's so great about it? Imagine being able to take off with a king-size, cartop luggage carrier that packs a whopping 36 cubic feet of waterproof tote space.

Imagine having an overnight overhead sleeper when you arrive that's as easy to set up as an umbrella!

Imagine being able to take along your own boat for a day of trolling a quiet stream!

All this is possible with this all-in-one Travelpod which I designed, built and tested with 300 lbs. of camping gear.

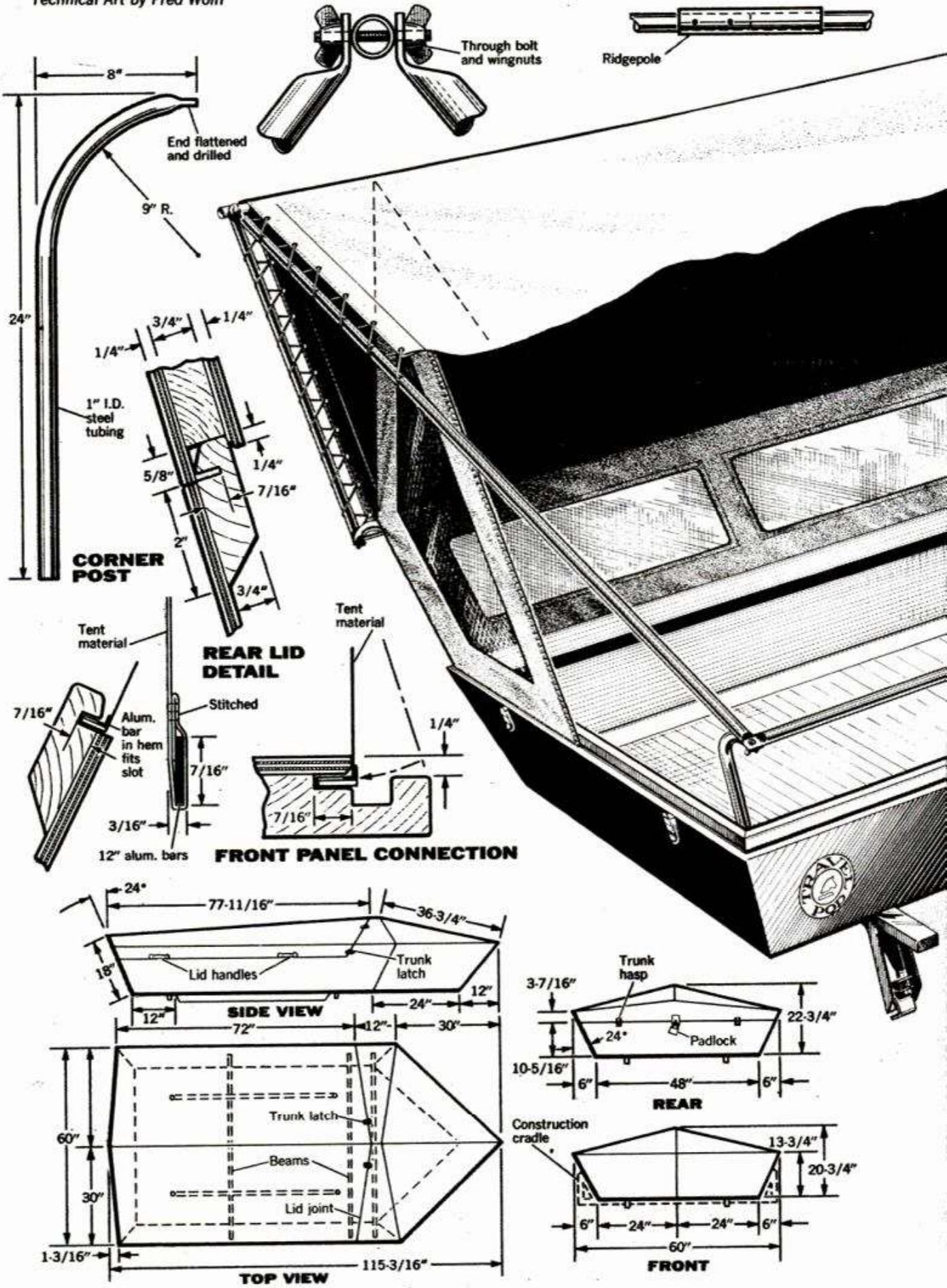
It turned out to be the most versatile and most functional camper on the road. What's more, we had the whole car to ourselves since everything can be stowed topside. The Pod is designed to mount on

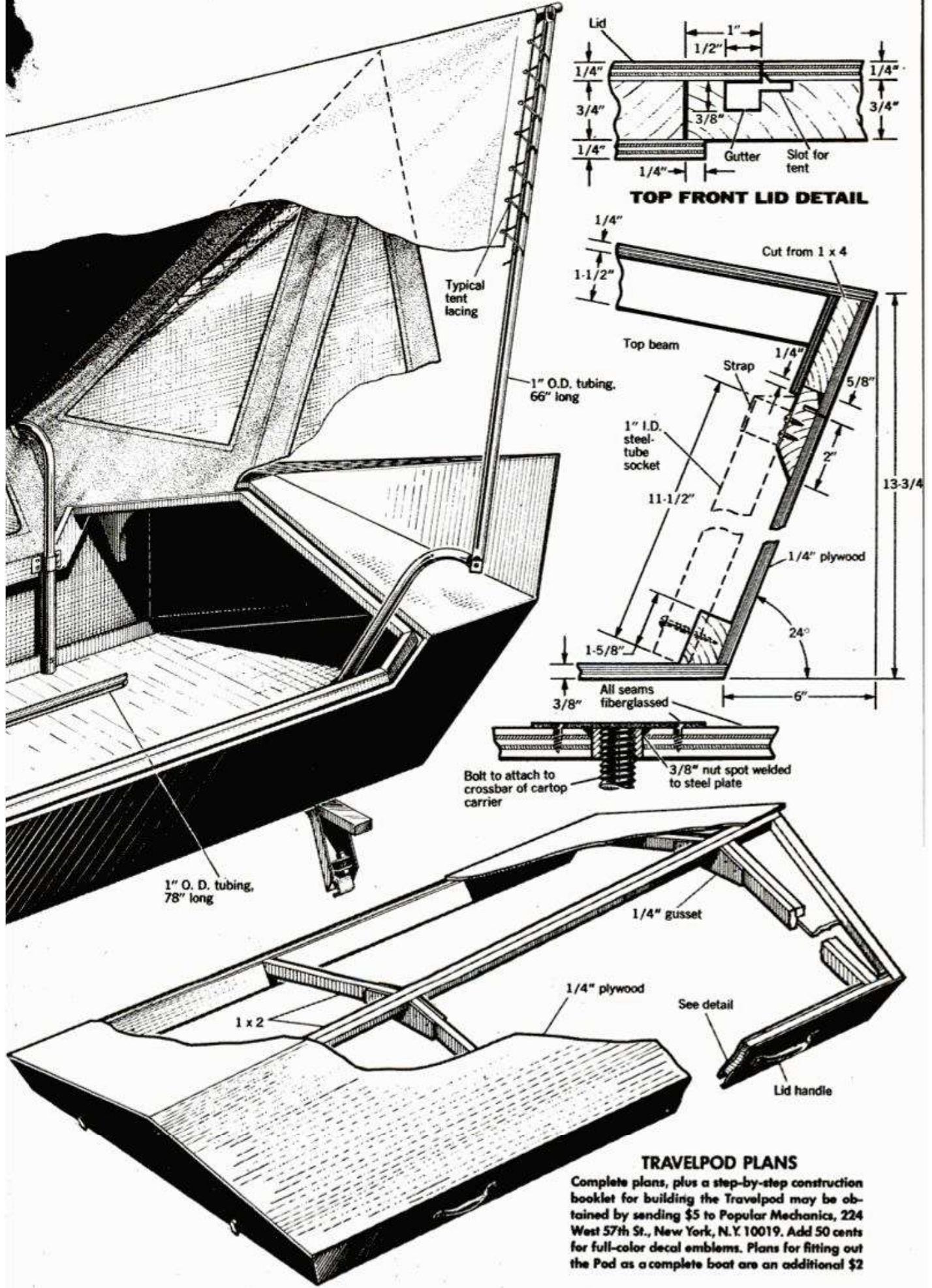


Photographed at
Cypress Gardens, Fla.,
by Monty Mont de Oca

TRAVELPOD - CARTOP CAMPER

Technical Art by Fred Wolff

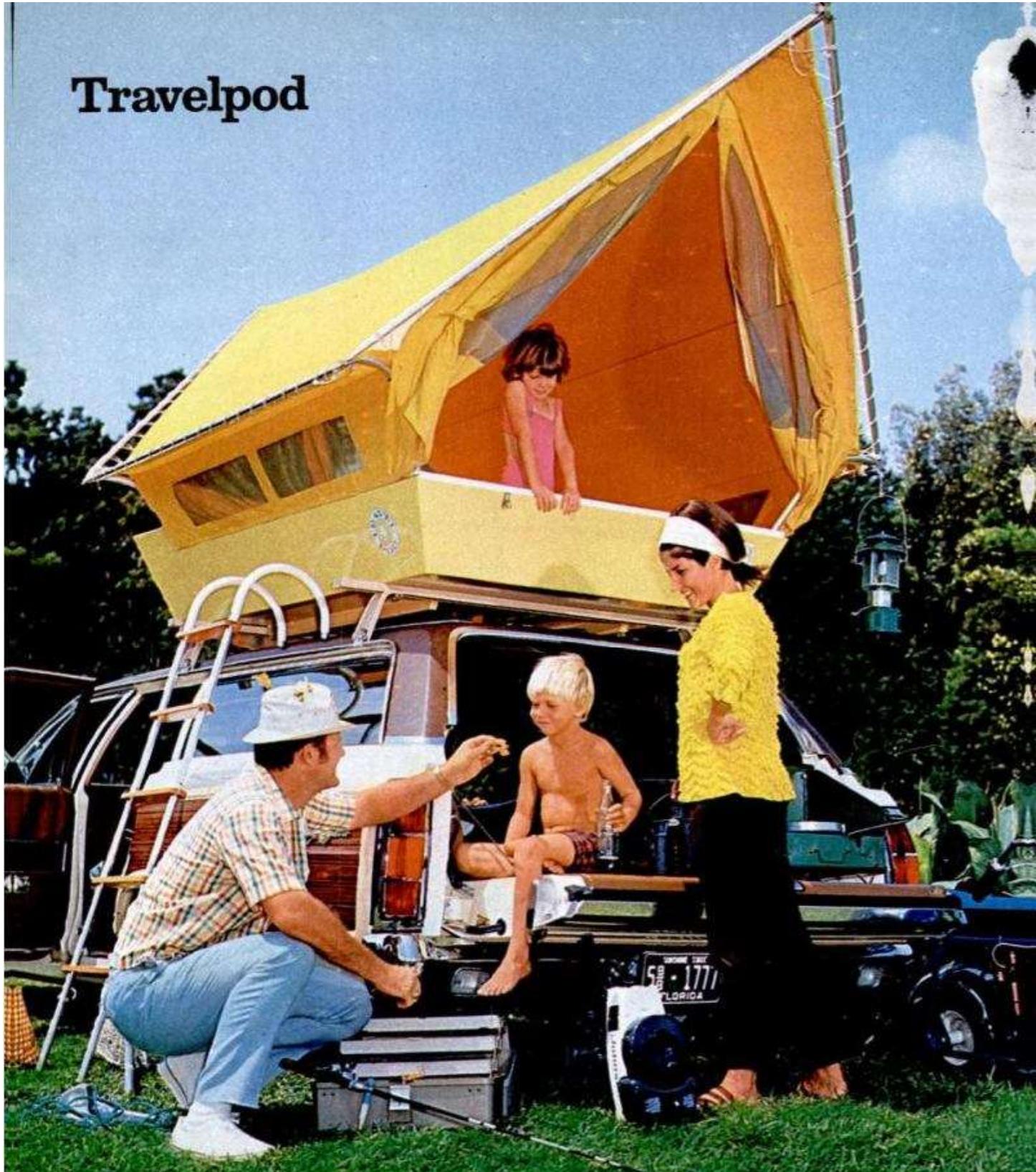




TRAVELPOD PLANS

Complete plans, plus a step-by-step construction booklet for building the Travelpod may be obtained by sending \$5 to Popular Mechanics, 224 West 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019. Add 50 cents for full-color decal emblems. Plans for fitting out the Pod as a complete boat are an additional \$2

Travelpod



regular steel luggage bars which rest on the wagontop and clip to the rain gutters. Access to the sleeper is by an aluminum boat ladder which stores on the underside of the sliding lid. To open the Pod on the road you simply slide back its lid; it has handles to lift it off. Contents are safe from rain by virtue of a tongue-and-groove waterproof track and are secured from theft by foot-locker-type trunk latches and a padlock.

One person can set up the Pod in minutes for sleeping. It's draftproof and you'll have no fear that the kids will fall out. Nylon-net windows ventilate the tent and, by design, the overhang of the roof provides adequate sun and rain protection. The tent rolls in a bundle only 8 in. in diameter by 6 ft. long and weighs 15 lbs. The broad, flat bottom allows the Pod to be a stable, minimum draft boat. A small electric (Please turn to page 220)

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AMC'S NEW HORNET

(Continued from page 99)

the overall size of the car. Enough for two weeks in the mountains or at the seashore, no; a weekend, yes.

Workmanship on our test Hornet was about on a par with the rest of Detroit's production—good to fair to dreadful. There were gaps where there shouldn't have been, poor fits that should have been like a kid glove. There was a good bit of interior plastic, a material I appreciate is a wonder of our times, but one whose inventor I'd like to poke in the nose. It's so . . . so . . . well, chintzy, and that says it.

Exterior styling on the Hornet is very smooth, very clean. It has a pleasing basic shape—no add-on trim, no seemingly tortured angles. Again, it looks like a car born of a single piece, not an assemblage of committee ideas. I can attest to several admiring glances; perhaps because the Hornet is still relatively new on the road, perhaps because it's simply a good-looking car. I hope with all my heart AMC stylists resist the temptation to festoon the car with the tacky, tasteless geegaws Detroit seems to have by the binful. I appreciate that cars have to appeal to kids, but the Woodstock nonsense was no epitome of good taste.

Summing up, I don't care for the Hornet's dash layout, its armrests, the fit of its carpet. I think the weight distribution could have been a little more equal (but here again this could have been because of the V8 and airconditioning); while not nose-heavy, the car leans that way ever-so. I like everything else about the car, not the least of which is its serviceability. I think the Hornet is honest goods, honestly sold; e.g., AMC doesn't claim buying the car will cure acne, restore flagging virility, make math a breeze. That it happens to be an exciting idea well done is just so much extra. ★★★

THREE-WAY TRAVELPOD

(Continued from page 162)

trolling motor is ideal to propel it and will run all day on a fully charged car battery. There's plenty of shade under the nose cone for an ice cooler, even a mini-TV set.

You can build a Travelpod of your own for about \$125 for materials. A complete set of plans includes the cutting patterns for the tent and details tubular framework. For the most part, the Pod and its lid are made of $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. marine plywood. Members which form the tongue-and-groove tracks are of solid stock. ★★★